

BOYS AND GIRLS

Forbid Them Not.

(By Mrs. McNaughton.)

Tom and Mary are standing in the firelight in the nursery. It is the eve of their birthday. They have only one birthday between them, for they are twins. To-morrow they will be thirteen — their first 'teen.' They feel that this birthday marks an era in their lives.

'I think we ought to do something really important to-morrow,' said Mary.

'It ought to be something that would affect our whole life,' replied Tom.

'And nothing childish,' added Mary. 'You know, Tom, that to-morrow we shall be nearly grown up.'

'What shall it be, then?' asked Tom.

'I think, Tom, dear,' said she, softly, 'that the best thing we could do would be to give our hearts to Jesus. Shall we?'

'I will, if you will,' replied Tom.

'Then we will,' said Mary, solemnly.

'Please, may Bertie, too?' broke in a little voice. The door had opened softly, and a little figure had crept in unseen into the dusky room. Tom and Mary were almost startled by the childish voice.

'I want to give my heart to Jesus, too,' he went on.

'Well, you can't,' replied Mary, 'you're too little.'

'I'm rather a big boy now, for five,' Uncle John said, so, he replied.

'You'll need to learn a little grammar, at any rate, Bertie,' said Tom.

'But I does want to give my heart to Jesus now,' he pleaded. 'Please may I?'

'No, you can't, Bertie. You are much too little.'

'How big will I need to be?' he asked again.

'I don't know, exactly—perhaps as big as Tom,' replied Mary.

'Please, Mary,' said Bertie—for, if grammar was his weak point, politeness was his strong one — 'I can't wait. I want to give my heart to Jesus just now.'

'Well, you can't; so say no more about it.'

Poor little boy! It was no use to talk to his brother and sister any more on the matter. Did Jesus want only big boys and girls? Would he not like just one little boy?

What a busy day was the birthday! Presents of all sorts and sizes for the happy twins. Then, later in the day, was the birthday party. Did anyone have so many cousins and friends as Tom and Mary? Most welcome of all was Uncle John. A poor sort of party it would have been without him. He was always so merry—no one left out in the cold—no time to 'wonder what we can do next' when Uncle John was there.

How happy and bright they all are! Bertie seems as joyous as if it were his own birthday. The day has been so full of interest that he has not once thought of the talk of last evening. But now, as he looks at Tom and Mary, he thinks the reason that they are so happy is because they have given their hearts to Jesus. How glad they must be that they are thirteen years old! Must he wait until he is thirteen before Jesus will take his heart? Perhaps ten would be old enough. Why not ask Uncle John?

At length Bertie finds his uncle in a quiet corner.

'Uncle John, please may I ask you something?'

'Of course you may, Bertie—a dozen questions if you like.'

'How big have boys to be before Jesus will take them?'

Uncle John's arm was round Bertie's shoulder, and he was drawn a little closer. The face that looked down upon the laddie softened.

'I had a wee girlie once, Bertie, and she was only half as old as you are when Jesus took her. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."'

Bertie thought he saw a big tear on Uncle John's cheek.

'And did Jesus say—little?' asked Bertie.

'Yes, Jesus said the "little children."'

'I am so glad,' began Bertie, 'because—' 'Uncle John! Uncle John! We all want you,' chimed in a chorus of voices. So the quiet talk was ended.

Bertie was the first to wake in the morning, perhaps because he was the first asleep. Before the party was quite over Bertie's eyelids wanted to close. He winked them very fast to wake them up, but soon they drooped again and shut themselves up quite tight. So, happy and sleepy, he was quietly carried off to bed.

Now he was dressed, and nurse had given him his breakfast, but Tom and Mary were not yet awake. Bertie was growing weary

of waiting for them. He wanted to tell them that he, too, was to be one of the Lord's children, because he had said, 'little children.'

'Nurse, please how long will they be?' he asked.

'I really don't know. They went to bed so late last night,' said the nurse.

'I've something very 'portant to tell them, nurse,' he went on. 'I do wish they would be quick.'

The time seemed very long to the little boy. He was so full of his glad news. He began to wonder if boys and girls ever slept all day after a birthday party.

'What's the important news, Bertie?' asked Tom and Mary, coming into the nursery suddenly.

'I'm so glad you's come,' said Bertie, his eyes sparkling for joy.

'I want to tell you Jesus wants little boys, 'cause he said, "Little children, come unto me." Isn't you glad?'

'You mean,' said Tom, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."'

'Yes,' replied Bertie, nodding his little bright head, 'that's it.'

'That does not mean you, Bertie,' said



Kissed His Mother.

She sat in the porch in the sunshine
As I went down the street—
A woman whose hair was silver,
But whose face was blossom sweet,
Making me think of a garden,
When, in spite of the frost and snow
Of bleak November weather,
Late fragrant lilies blow.

I heard a footstep behind me,
And the sound of a merry laugh,
And I knew the heart it came from
Would be like a comforting staff
In the time and the hour of trouble,
Hopeful and brave and strong—
One of the hearts to lean on
When we think all things are wrong.

He went up the pathway singing;
I saw the woman's eyes
Grow bright with a wordless welcome,
As sunshine warms the skies.
'Back again, sweetheart mother,'

He cried, and bent to kiss
The loving face that was lifted
For what some mothers miss.

That boy will do to depend on;
I hold that this is true—
From lads in love with their mothers
Our bravest heroes grew.
Earth's grandest hearts have been loving
hearts
Since time and earth began;
And the boy who kisses his mother
Is every inch a man.
—'Children's Treasury.'